

S12. Drug addictions. New aspects in research and treatment

THE EVALUATION OF METHADONE SUBSTITUTION THERAPY IN EUROPE

AH Ghodse, C Clancy, M Jones, Lynch D, P Schoemann
St George's Hospital Medical School, Cranmer Terrace, London SW17 ORE, England.

The Evaluation of the Methadone Substitution Therapy (MST) and its Impact on HIV Risk Behaviours is a European multicentre study funded by the European Commission during 1992/93.

The aims of the study are:

1. To evaluate the effect of Methadone Substitution Therapy on opiate dependents in treatment centres in different European countries, by measuring a number of specific variables. These will include HIV status as well as other physical and psycho-social dimensions.
2. To determine the features of treatment outcome common to the treatment centres.

The project commenced in January 1992 and is co-ordinated through the European Collaborating Centres in Addiction Studies (ECCAS). There are 13 participating centres representing Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

There are wide differences in treatment regimes on offer for opiate dependents throughout European countries. By initiating a collaborative project involving a number of treatment services throughout Europe, the differences and similarities in treatment impact can be measured.

Although the general clinical efficacy of MST has been established, the association between pre-admission characteristics of patients and favourable outcome has not yet been demonstrated. This project has developed and piloted research instruments which will help to demonstrate any such association.

Furthermore, there is now evidence of differences in prevalence of HIV among drug users in different European countries. It is hoped that this project will go some way towards explaining these differences.

Up to 100 subjects have been recruited in each participating treatment centre. Preliminary findings are presented with discussion of their possible implications and suggestions for future research.

METHADONE-RESEARCH-PROGRAM-NORDRHEIN-WEST FALIA/FRG FIRST RESEARCH PROJECT IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY STUDYING "SUBSTITUTION-SUPPORTED-TREATMENT" OF THE OPIOID-DEPENDENCY

C. Rösinger, M. Gastpar

Rheinische Landes-und Hochschulklinik Essen, Klinik für Allgemeine Psychiatrie, Hufelandstraße 55, 45147 Essen

At the end of a 5-year follow-up evaluation of a group of addicts previously having failed in abstinence-treatment following results were found:

A considerable part of these individuals with multiple medical and psychosocial damages participating in a high threshold substitution-treatment-program can be reached by successful therapeutic interventions.

The therapeutic effects refer to the social integration, the ability to work and the medical and psychiatric state of health.

In addition to the opioid-addiction most of the individuals have one or more other psychiatric diagnoses (comorbidity), mostly regarded as severe.

In a general way accessible to treatment even those individuals are seen, which show at the beginning of the therapy (additional to addiction and a personality disorder) another diagnosis of dependency of one or several other single substances.

On the other hand most of the patients with an early diagnosis of polytoxicomania (following DSM-III-R) had to be excluded in the later course of the program.

These results are discussed in the context of the data available from other European countries.

Need for further investigations is specified.

DEPRESSION AND DRUG ADDICTION, AN INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMCN Stefanis, A Kokkevi

Department of Psychiatry, Athens University, Eginition Hospital, 74 Vas. Sophias Ave., Athens 11528, Greece

A close association of drug abuse/dependence and mental disorders has long been recognised as a factor contributing to onset, course and treatment outcome of both disorders. It is, though, only recently that strict methodology, employing standardized assessment instruments, was applied mainly in the North America studies, to investigate this association. Our group has carried a number of studies on this issue. In one of these studies carried out in a nationwide multistage stratified probability sample of students and in which a 19 item scale was used in assessing psychopathological symptoms, it was found that depression scores increase significantly with the progressive transition from licit to illicit drug use. In a second study, psychiatric comorbidity was investigated with the DIS in two groups of opiate addicts, one imprisoned and the other attendant of health services (total 176). The findings of the study were compared with the prevalence rates of psychopathology, depression in particular, in the general population. The results of this study indicate a higher odds ratio of depression in the group of opiate addicts validating the close association of drug abuse/dependence with depression. Finally in a third study, the contribution of sociocultural factors to drug dependence - mental disorder comorbidity is currently being carried out through a European collaborative study. On the basis of the detailed findings of these studies, the multidimensional issue of drug dependence - mental disorder comorbidity will be discussed.

NALTREXONE AS AN AID TO RECOVERY IN ALCOHOL DEPENDENCEJonathan Chick

Department of Psychiatry, Edinburgh University, EH10 5HF, Scotland

Naltrexone is an opiate antagonist which reduces alcohol consumption in experimental animals. Its use in recently detoxified alcoholics has been examined in North America and results are promising, particularly in helping to prevent relapse in patients who start drinking. A UK-multi-centre is attempting to replicate those results, in samples of patients who will not have had as much previous exposure to opiates as may have been the case in the North American samples. Naltrexone may block rebound deficient endorphin states which can occur in alcoholics.

NEW DEVELOPMENT IN THE PHARMACOTHERAPY OF ALCOHOL AND DRUG ADDICTION

P.J. Geerlings M.D.

Jellinek Clinic and Department of Psychiatry University of Amsterdam, J.Obrechtstraat 92, 1071 KR Amsterdam, Netherlands

Alcohol and drug addicts are heterogeneous groups, which requires different treatment approaches. In Amsterdam, approximately 70 % of the 7000 drug addicts had contact with the helping system and 6 % of the alcoholics according DSM-III criteria in the general population were in treatment for their alcoholism. The proportion of opioid addicts with alcohol dependence, antisocial personality and anxiety and affective disorders was very high.

The group of drug addicts with disruptive behavior and dyssocial personality characteristics should be treated with a range of pharmacotherapeutic substitution options, depending of the phase in the motivational process and the psychiatric comorbidity.

The possibilities of pharmacotherapy for opioid and cocaine addicts and polysubstance abusers in a comprehensive treatment programme will be discussed.